



No.102 Rs. 3.50

# NAGANANDA



AN ADAPTATION OF HARSHA'S FAMOUS  
SANSKRIT PLAY.

CMVitrans



Besides being a patron of art and literature, King Harshavardhana of Kannauj, who reigned from about 606 A. D. to 647 A. D., was himself a dramatist of high repute. Although he may have been influenced by Kalidasa, Harsha was a dramatist with original ideas, imagination and techniques.

Nagananda is the dramatisation of a Buddhist legend that occurs in the Brihat Katha. It is the story of Jimutavahana, a Vidyadhara prince, who finds contentment in sacrificing his own life so that others might live. He invites death and likes it. "Even on my mother's lap, as a child, I had not experienced the joy that I am experiencing now on the seat of sacrifice"— Thus he faces death with a smile which ultimately brings about a transformation in Garuda, the mythical bird.

In "Nagananda", Harsha has tried to blend Buddhism and Hinduism. The ideal of sacrificing one's life, if need be, for the sake of another is essentially Buddhist. The parts played by Garuda and Goddess Gauri and the reference to Indra and the other Hindu gods give the story a Puranic touch.

I-tsing, the Chinese traveller, records that Harsha versified the story of Bodhisatva Jimutavahana and acted it on the stage.

AMAR CHITRA KATHA means good reading.  
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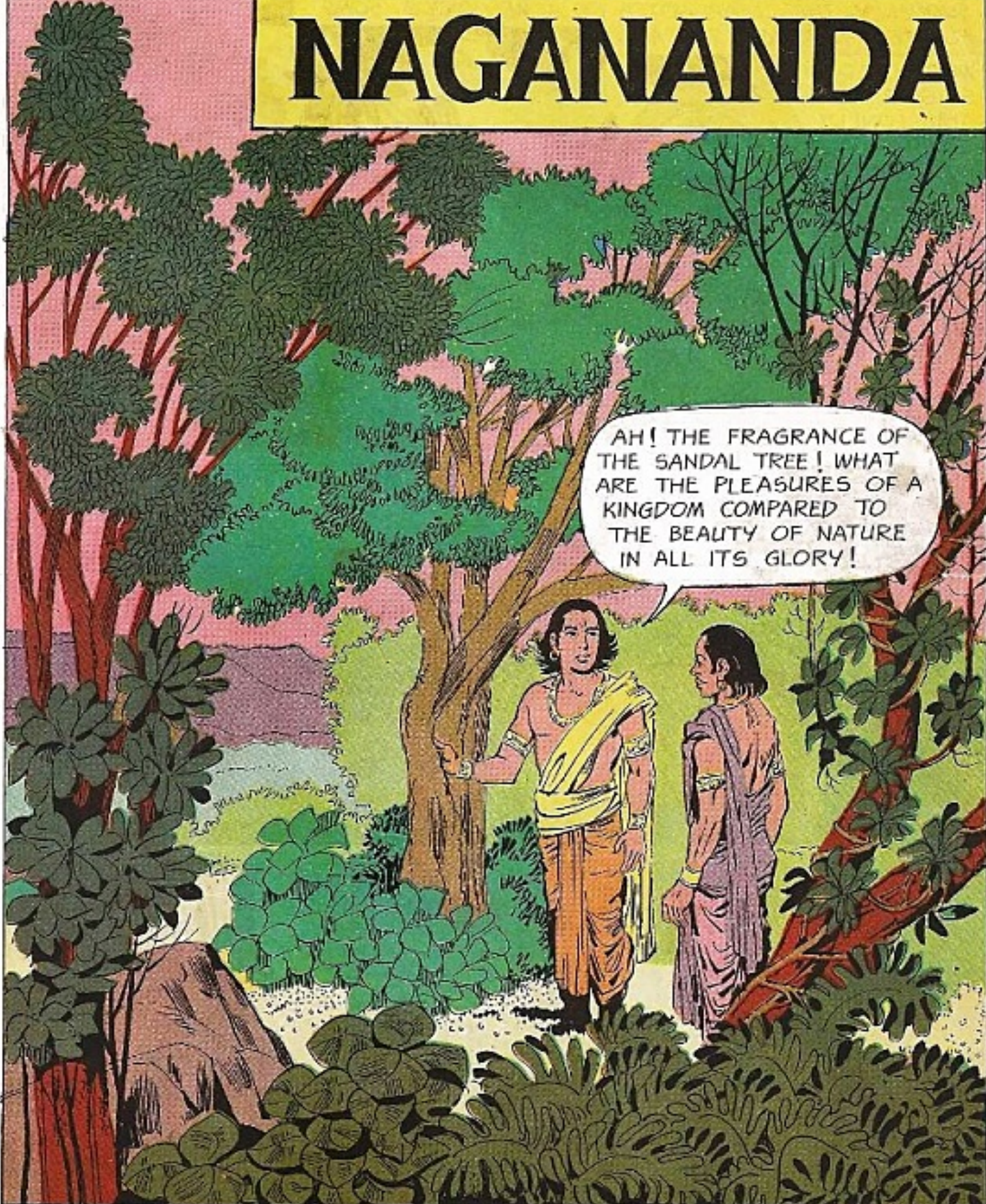
Editor: Anant Pai

Script: Subba Rao

Illustrations: M.N. Nangare



# NAGANANDA



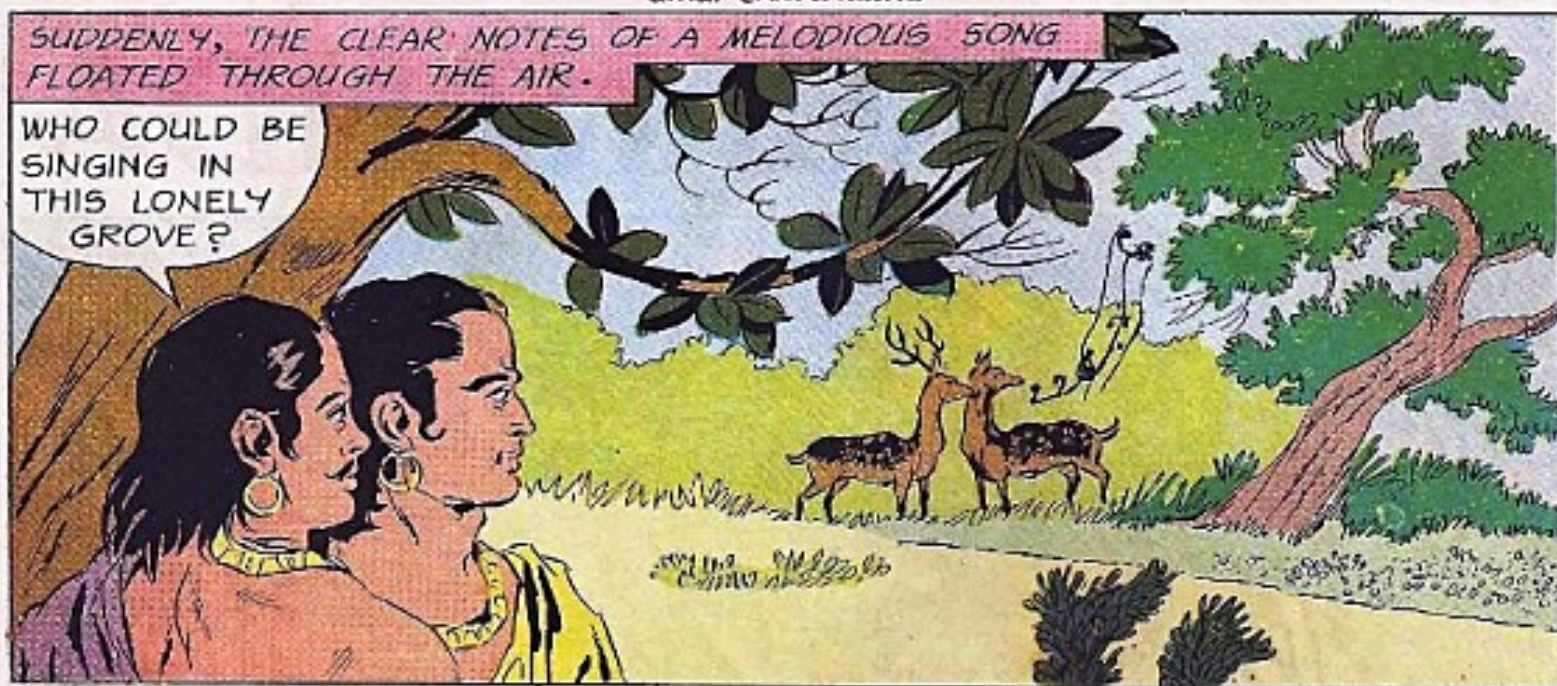
AH! THE FRAGRANCE OF THE SANDAL TREE! WHAT ARE THE PLEASURES OF A KINGDOM COMPARED TO THE BEAUTY OF NATURE IN ALL ITS GLORY!

HAVING ENTRUSTED HIS KINGDOM TO HIS MINISTERS, JIMUTAVAHANA, THE VIDYADHARA PRINCE, HAD DEDICATED HIS LIFE TO THE SERVICE OF HIS AGED PARENTS. ALONG WITH HIS FRIEND ATREYA, HE WAS NOW AT THE MALAYA MOUNTAINS LOOKING FOR A SUITABLE HERMITAGE FOR THEM.

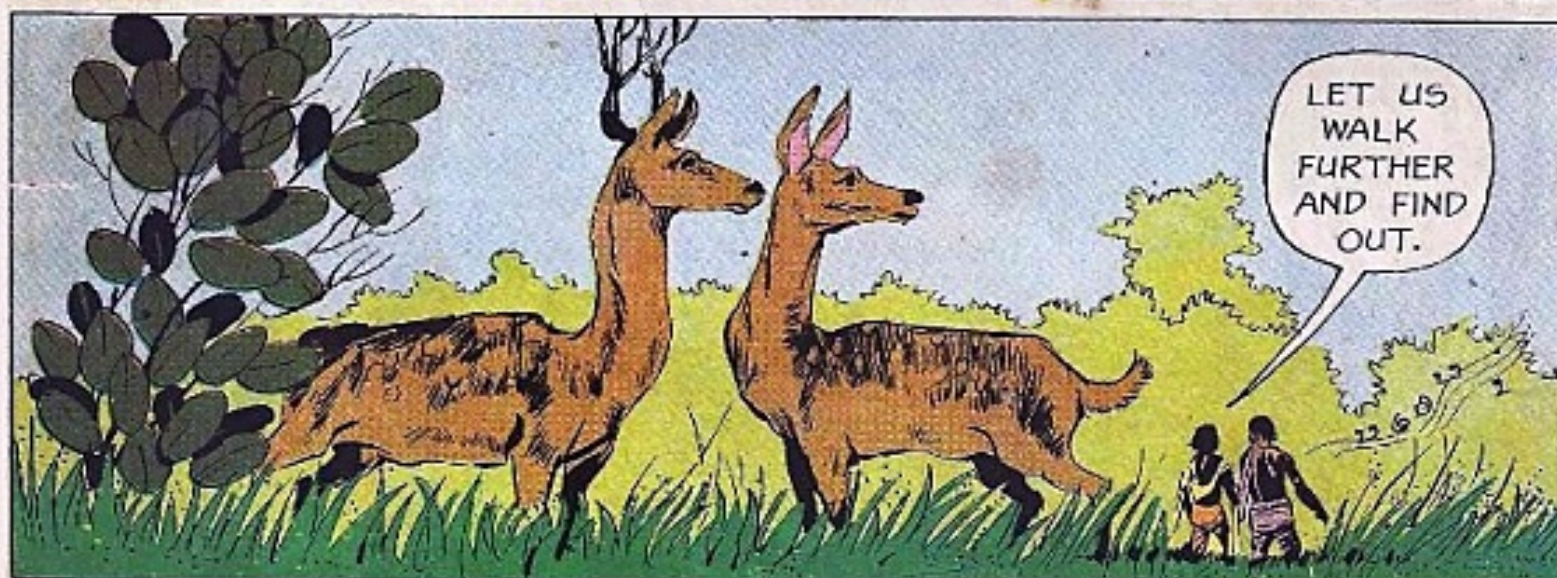


SUDDENLY, THE CLEAR NOTES OF A MELODIOUS SONG FLOATED THROUGH THE AIR.

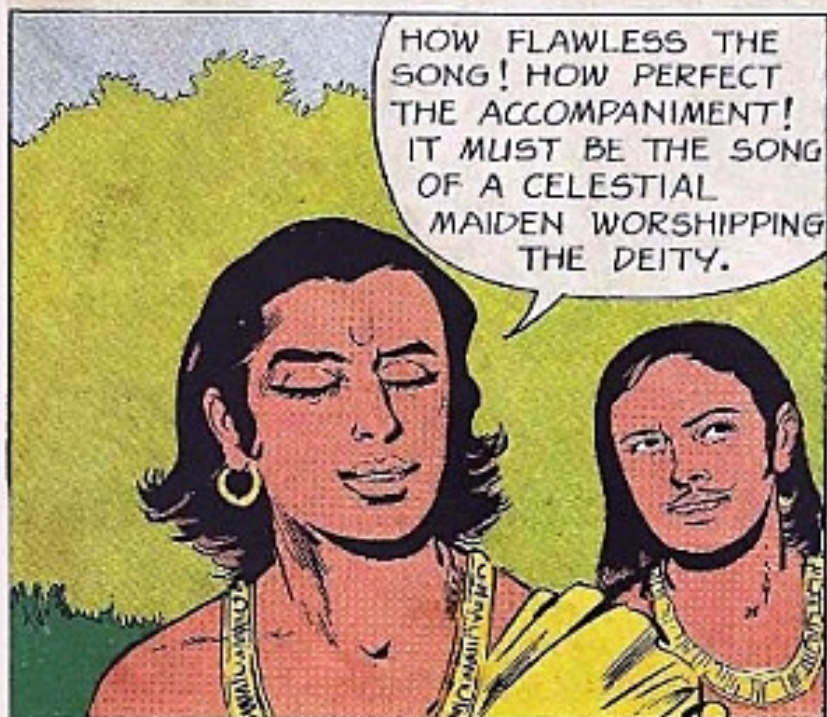
WHO COULD BE SINGING IN THIS LONELY GROVE?



LET US WALK FURTHER AND FIND OUT.



HOW FLAWLESS THE SONG! HOW PERFECT THE ACCOMPANIMENT! IT MUST BE THE SONG OF A CELESTIAL MAIDEN WORSHIPPING THE DEITY.



COME, FRIEND. THEN WE TOO SHALL WORSHIP THE DEITY!





AS THEY NEARED THE TEMPLE—



OH! IT IS INDEED  
A MAIDEN! LET  
US ENTER.

WAIT! SHE  
MAY STOP  
SINGING IF  
SHE SEES US.  
LET HER  
FINISH THE  
SONG.

AS SOON AS THE SONG WAS OVER—



O PRINCESS MALAYAVATI,  
WHY DO YOU WASTE  
YOUR TIME WORSHIPPING  
THIS MERCILESS DEITY?  
YOUR DEVOTION SEEMS  
TO HAVE NO EFFECT  
ON HER.

YOU ARE WRONG, CHATURIKA.  
EARLY THIS MORNING SHE  
APPEARED IN MY DREAM AND  
FAVoured ME WITH A VARA.\*  
A VIDYADHARA PRINCE WOULD  
SOON MARRY ME, SHE  
PROMISED.

\* BOON. ALSO MEANS HUSBAND.

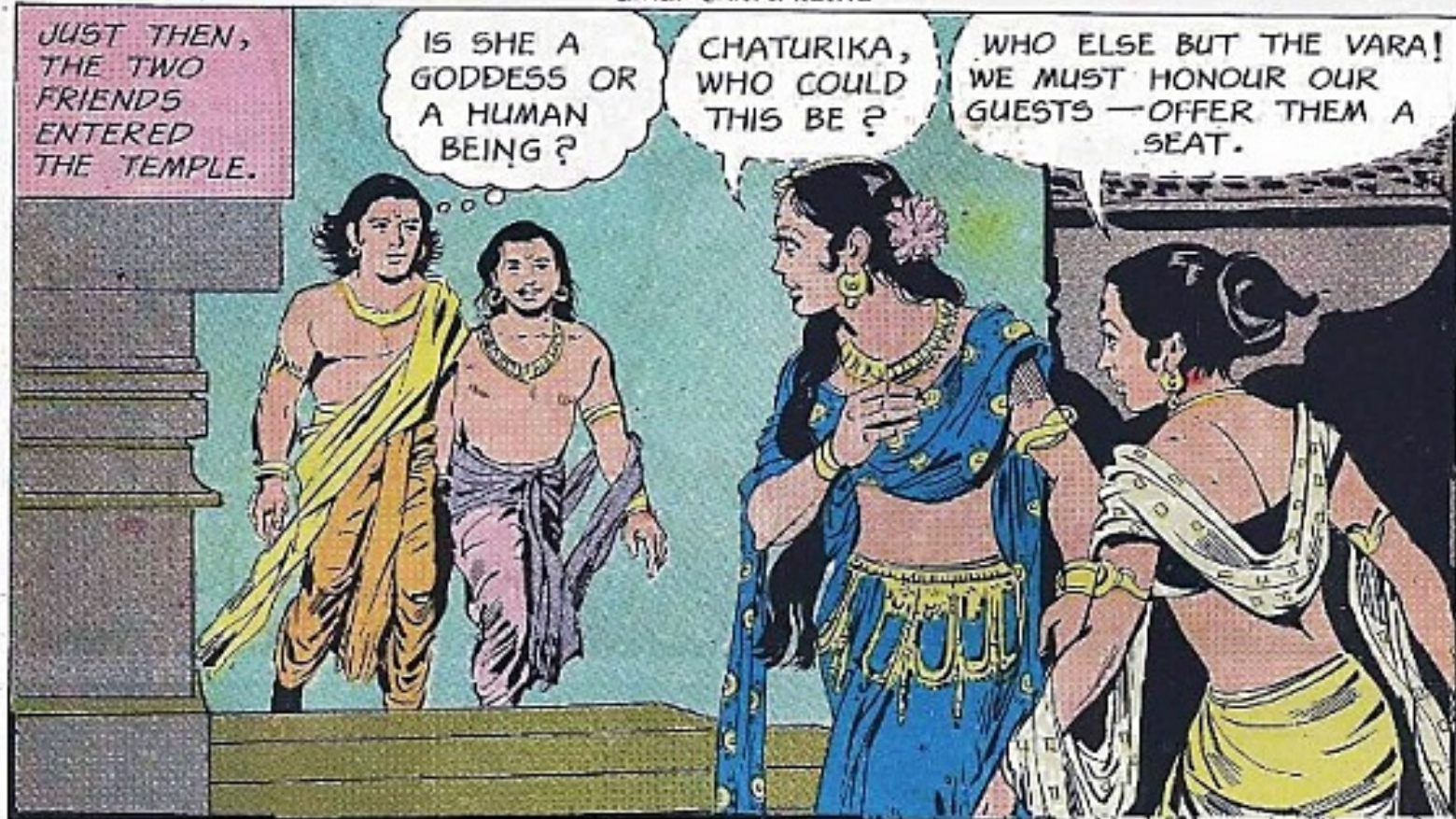


JUST THEN,  
THE TWO  
FRIENDS  
ENTERED  
THE TEMPLE.

IS SHE A  
GODDESS OR  
A HUMAN  
BEING?

CHATURIKA,  
WHO COULD  
THIS BE?

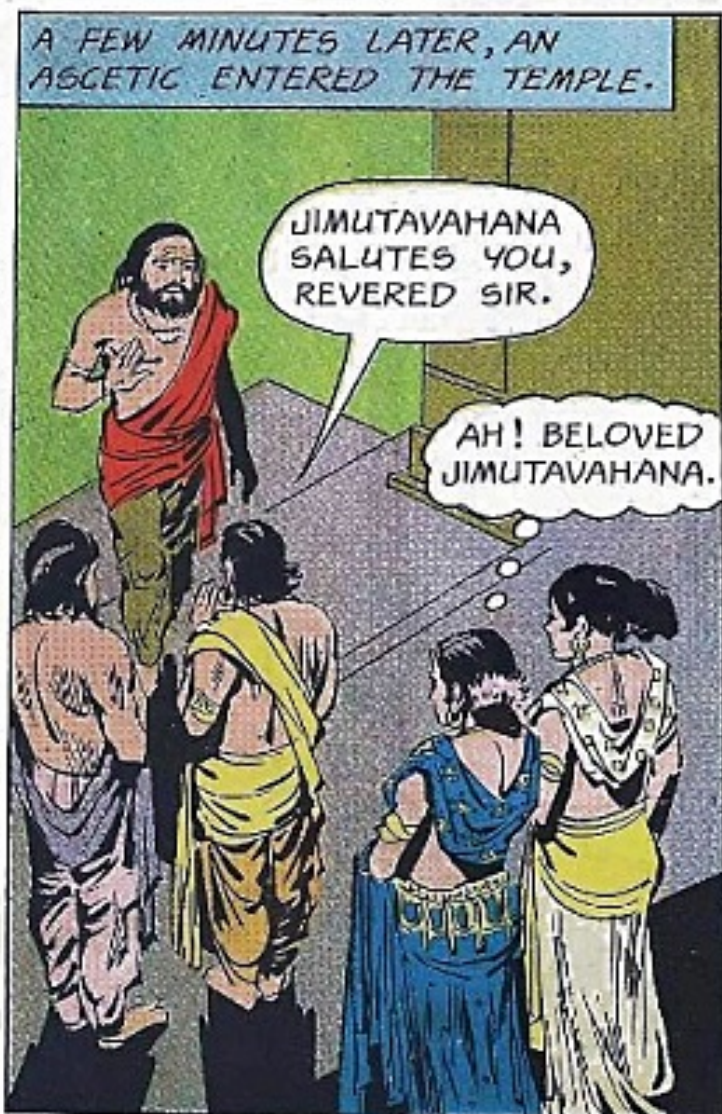
WHO ELSE BUT THE VARA!  
WE MUST HONOUR OUR  
GUESTS—OFFER THEM A  
SEAT.



A FEW MINUTES LATER, AN  
ASCETIC ENTERED THE TEMPLE.

JIMUTAVAHANA  
SALUTES YOU,  
REVERED SIR.

AH! BELOVED  
JIMUTAVAHANA.



THE ASCETIC ACKNOWLEDGED  
JIMUTAVAHANA'S GESTURE AND  
TURNED TO MALAYAVATI.


SAGE KAUSHIKA\* HAS  
SENT FOR YOU. IT IS  
TIME FOR THE  
MIDDAY WORSHIP.

I SHALL LEAVE  
IMMEDIATELY,  
SIR!






MALAYAVATI AND CHATURIKA LEFT THE TEMPLE.




ARE YOU A NAGAKANYA\* OR A PRINCESS OF THE SIDDHAS? WHOEVER YOU ARE, YOU HAVE POSSESSED MY HEART.

MY BODY OBEYS THE COMMAND OF MY GURU BUT MY HEART LINGERS ON.




LOVE MAY FEED THE HEART. BUT THE BODY NEEDS OTHER NOURISHMENT. LET'S GO. THE HERMITS AWAIT US FOR THE NOONDAY MEAL.

THE NEXT DAY, OUTSIDE THE GARDEN HOUSE —



I CANNOT BEAR THIS TORMENT ANY LONGER, CHATURIKA. CAN YOU THINK OF ANY REMEDY?

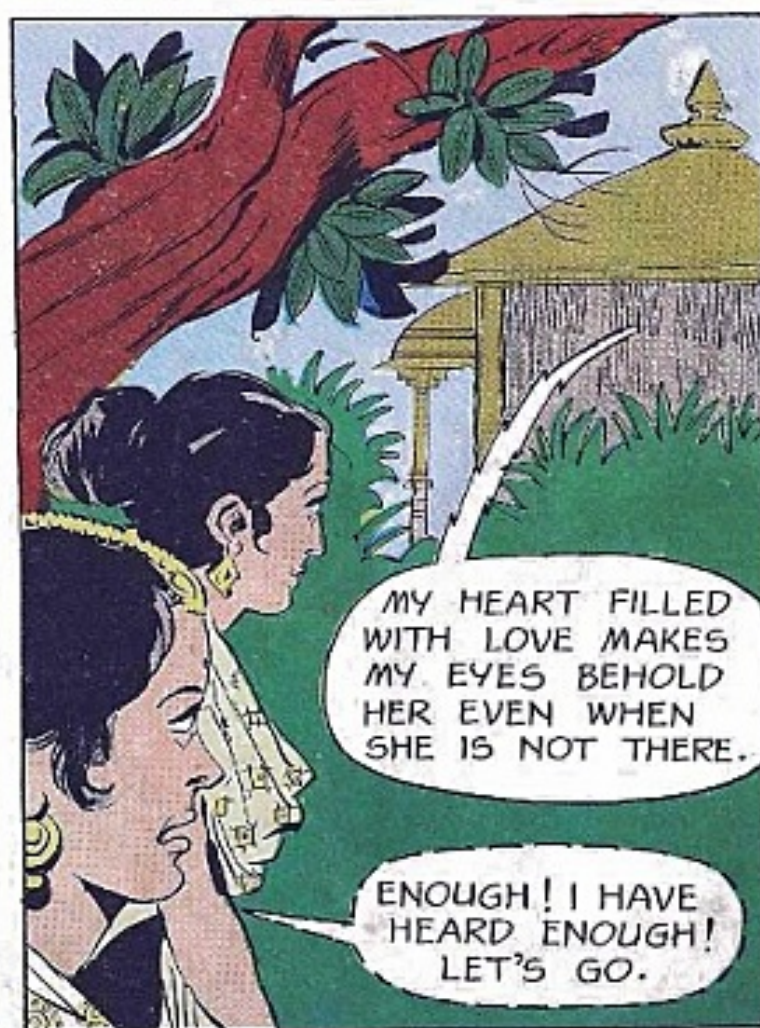
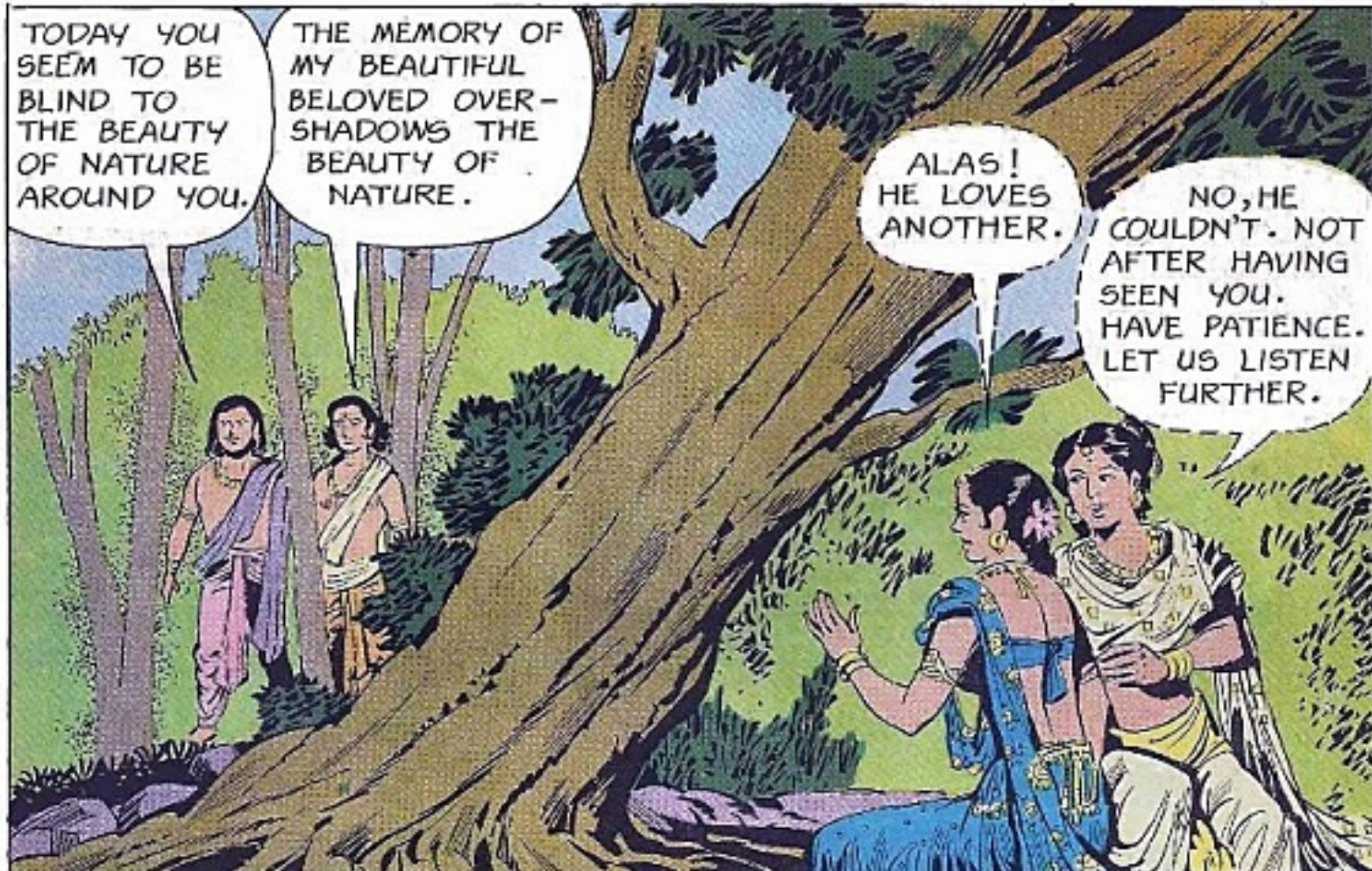
THERE IS ONLY ONE— AND HE IS HEADING THIS WAY.



I CAN'T FACE HIM. HE'LL GUESS MY SECRET. LET US RUN AWAY.

NO! WAIT! LET THEM PASS. WE'LL FOLLOW THEM AND OVERHEAR THEIR CONVERSATION.









IT'S MITRAVASU,  
THE SIDDHA PRINCE!  
QUICK! COVER THE  
PORTRAIT.

MALAYAVATI,  
IT'S YOUR  
BROTHER. HE  
MUST NOT  
SEE US.



WELCOME, MITRA-  
VASU. IS THE  
KING, YOUR  
FATHER, WELL?

HE IS. I BRING  
YOU A  
PROPOSAL  
FROM HIM.

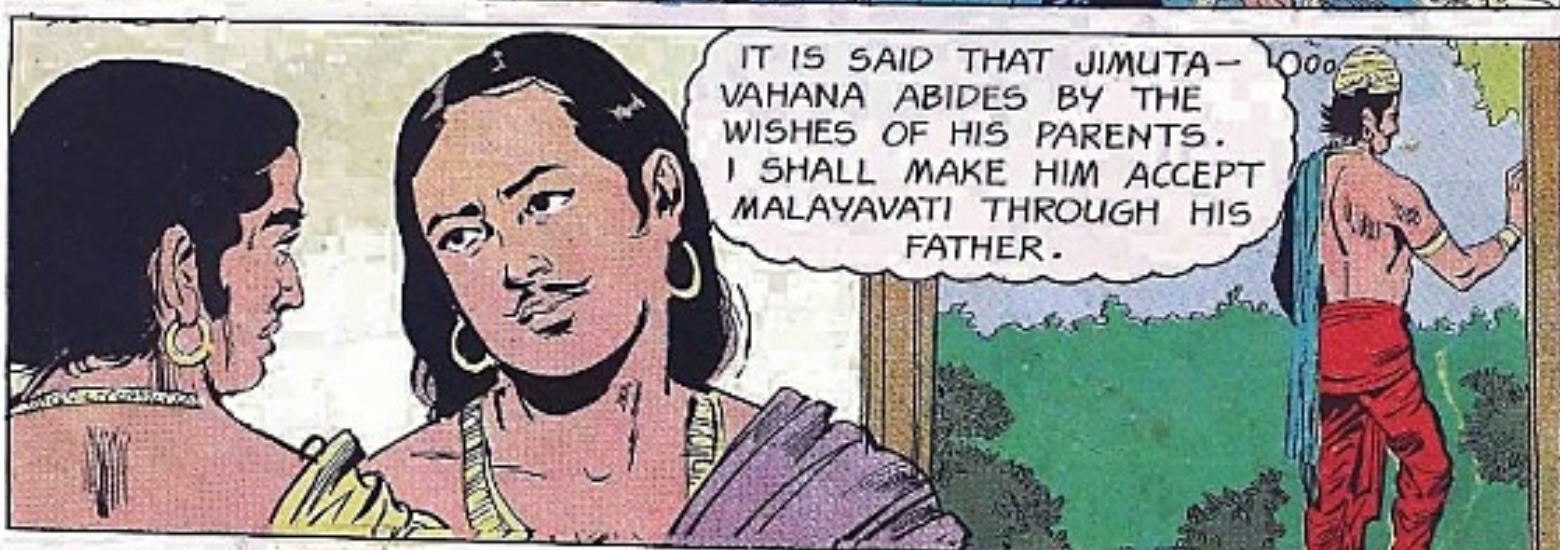


HE WANTS  
YOU TO  
MARRY MY  
SISTER, THE  
PRINCESS  
MALAYAVATI.

CHATURIKA LOOKED ANXIOUSLY AT  
MALAYAVATI AS THEY WAITED FOR  
JIMUTAVAHANA'S REACTION.









CHATURIKA WALKED A SHORT WAY AND STOPPED.



MALAYAVATI IS HEART-BROKEN AND MUST NOT BE LEFT ALONE. I'LL HIDE HERE AND WATCH HER.

O GODDESS GOWRI, YOUR WORDS HAVE PROVED FALSE. LIFE HAS NO MEANING FOR ME NOW.



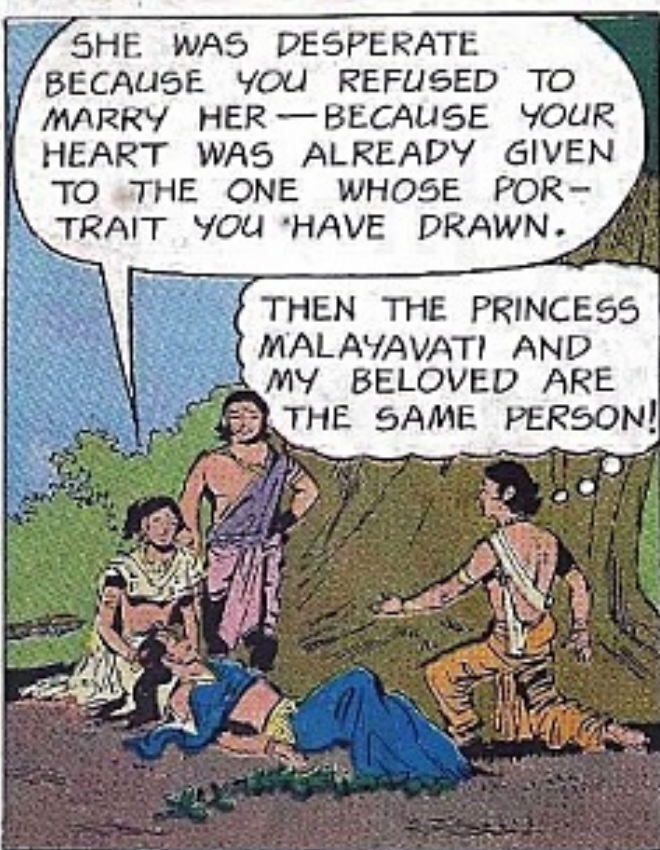
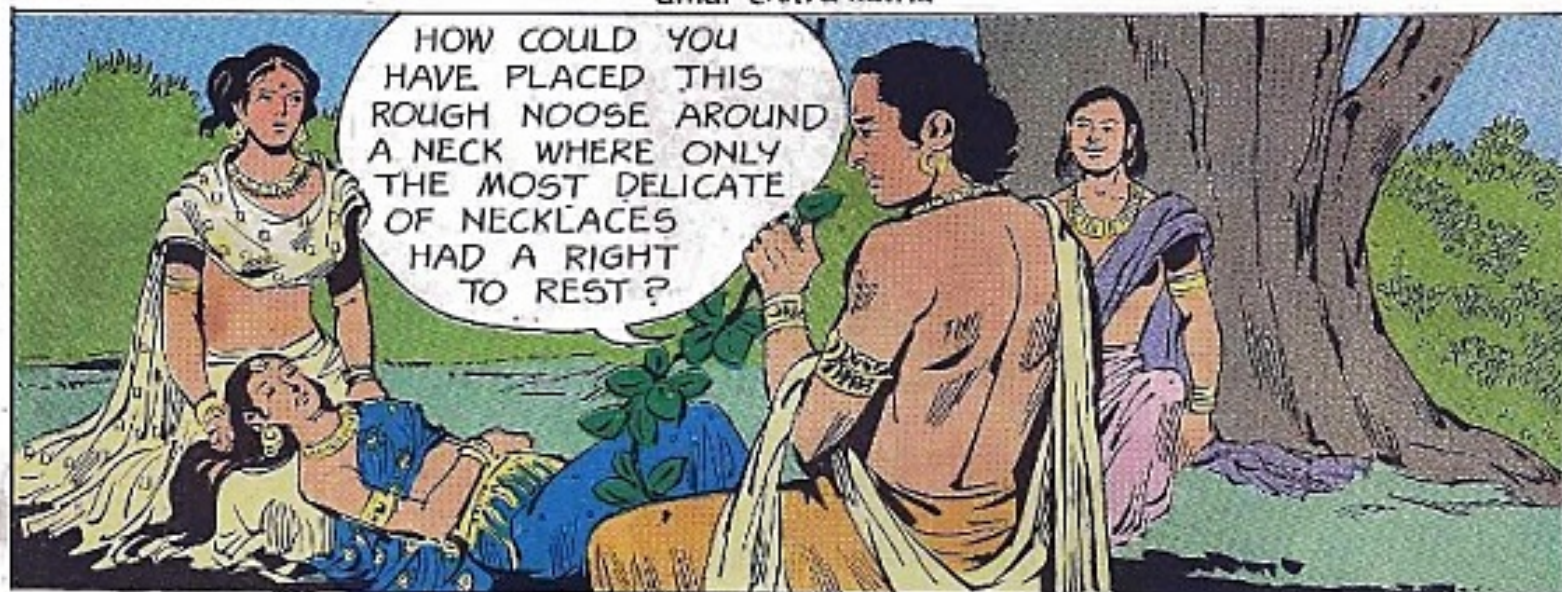
AND MALAYAVATI HANGED HERSELF FROM A TREE. FOR A MOMENT CHATURIKA WAS STRUCK DUMB WITH HORROR. THEN —



HELP!  
HELP! THE PRINCESS!  
SAVE THE PRINCESS!

HEARING CHATURIKA'S CRY, JIMUTAVAHANA RUSHED OUT OF THE GARDEN HOUSE.







BUT JIMUTAVAHANA  
HAD TO FIRST  
ENLIGHTEN HIS  
BELOVED.

WHY DID YOU  
SAVE MY LIFE?  
PLEASE LET  
ME GO.

NOT UNTIL YOU HAVE  
SEEN THE PORTRAIT OF MY  
BELOVED—THE ONE I HAVE  
DRAWN. COME. I'LL SHOW  
IT TO YOU.

HE TOOK HER INTO THE GARDEN HOUSE.

THIS IS THE  
GIRL TO WHOM  
I HAVE GIVEN  
MY HEART.

WHY, CHATURIKA!  
IT SEEMS TO BE  
MY PORTRAIT!

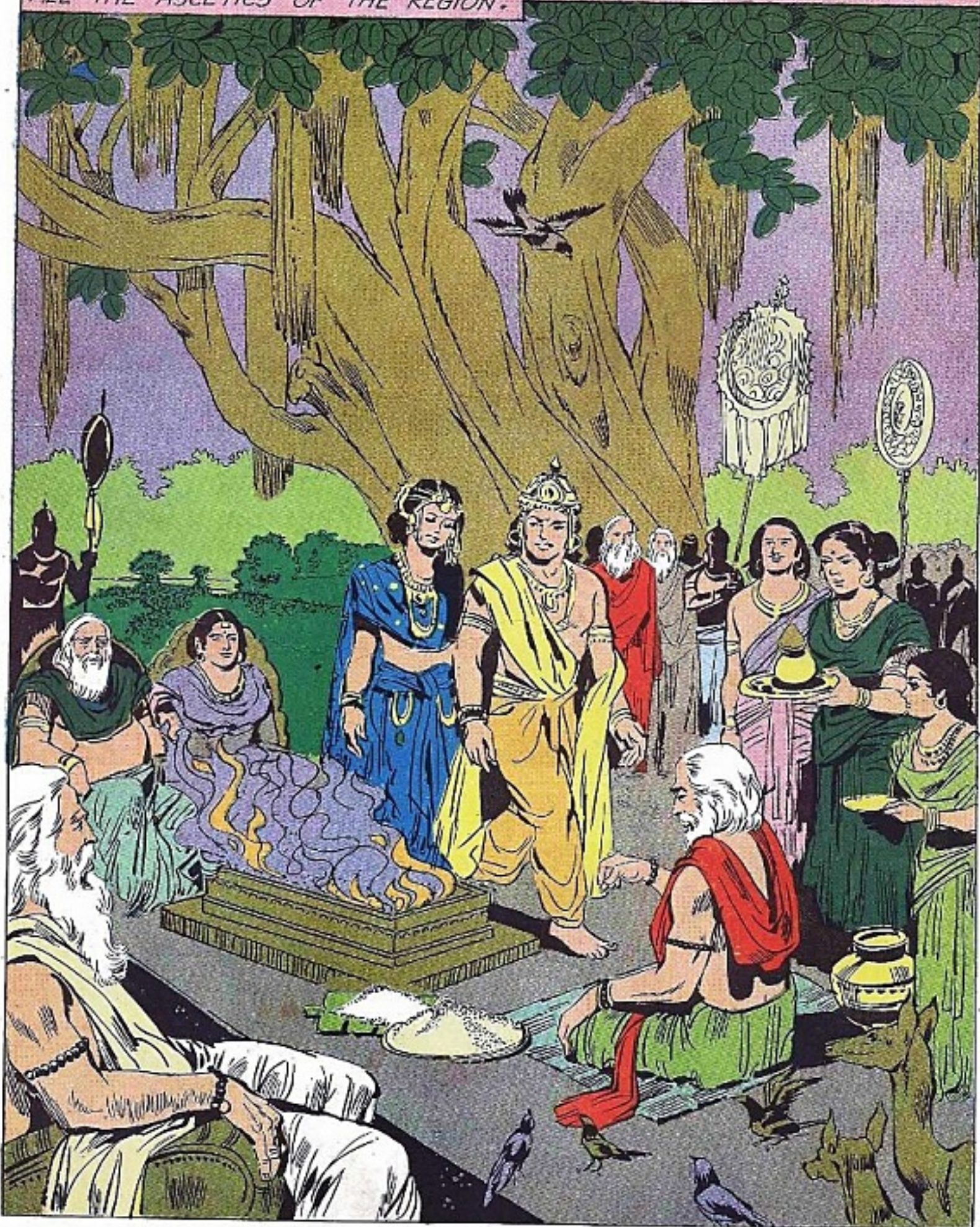
AT THAT MOMENT, MITRAVASU RETURNED FROM A VISIT  
TO JIMUTAVAHANA'S PARENTS.

YOUR FATHER  
WANTS YOU  
TO MARRY  
MY SISTER—  
WITHOUT  
ANY DELAY.

SO SHALL IT BE, FRIEND. I HAVE  
NEVER GONE AGAINST THE  
WISHES OF MY REVERED  
FATHER.



THE WEDDING OF JIMUTAVAHANA AND MALAYAVATI WAS ATTENDED BY ALL THE ASCETICS OF THE REGION.

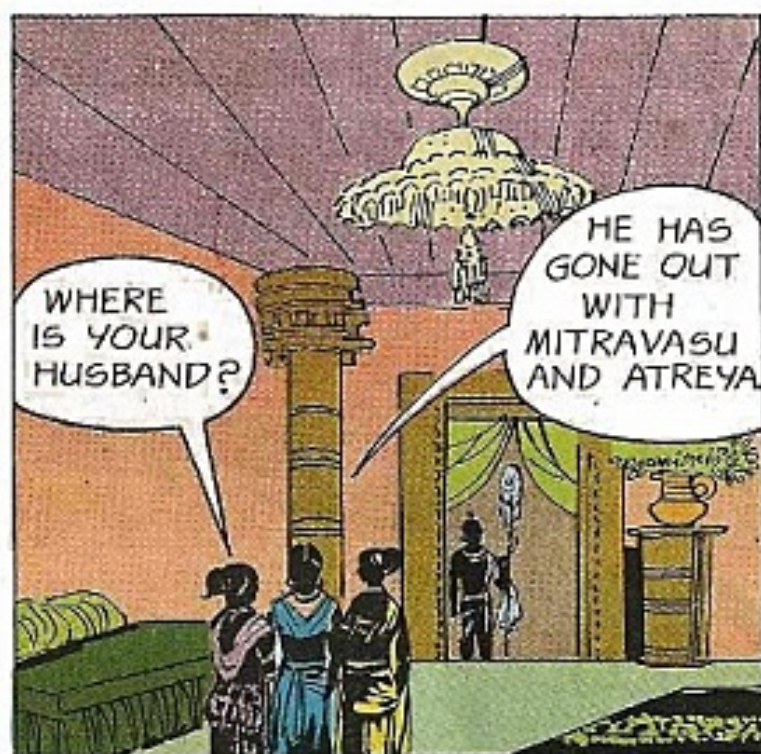




THE DAY AFTER THE WEDDING —

FOR HOW MANY DAYS MUST I WEAR THESE RED ROBES, MOTHER.

BOTH OF YOU MUST WEAR THEM FOR TEN DAYS, DEAR.



WHERE IS YOUR HUSBAND?

HE HAS GONE OUT WITH MITRAVASU AND ATREYA

THE SIDDHA QUEEN CALLED A SERVANT.

TAKE THIS RED ROBE TO THE BRIDEGROOM.



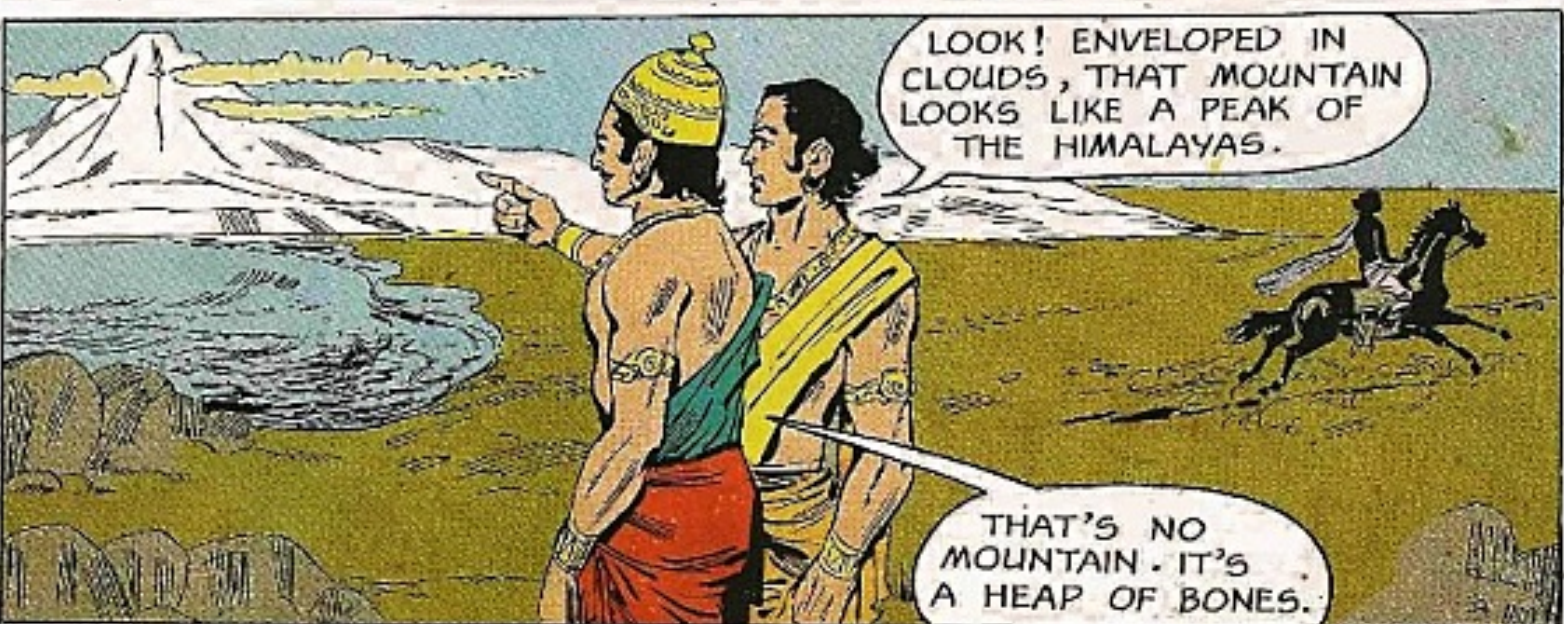
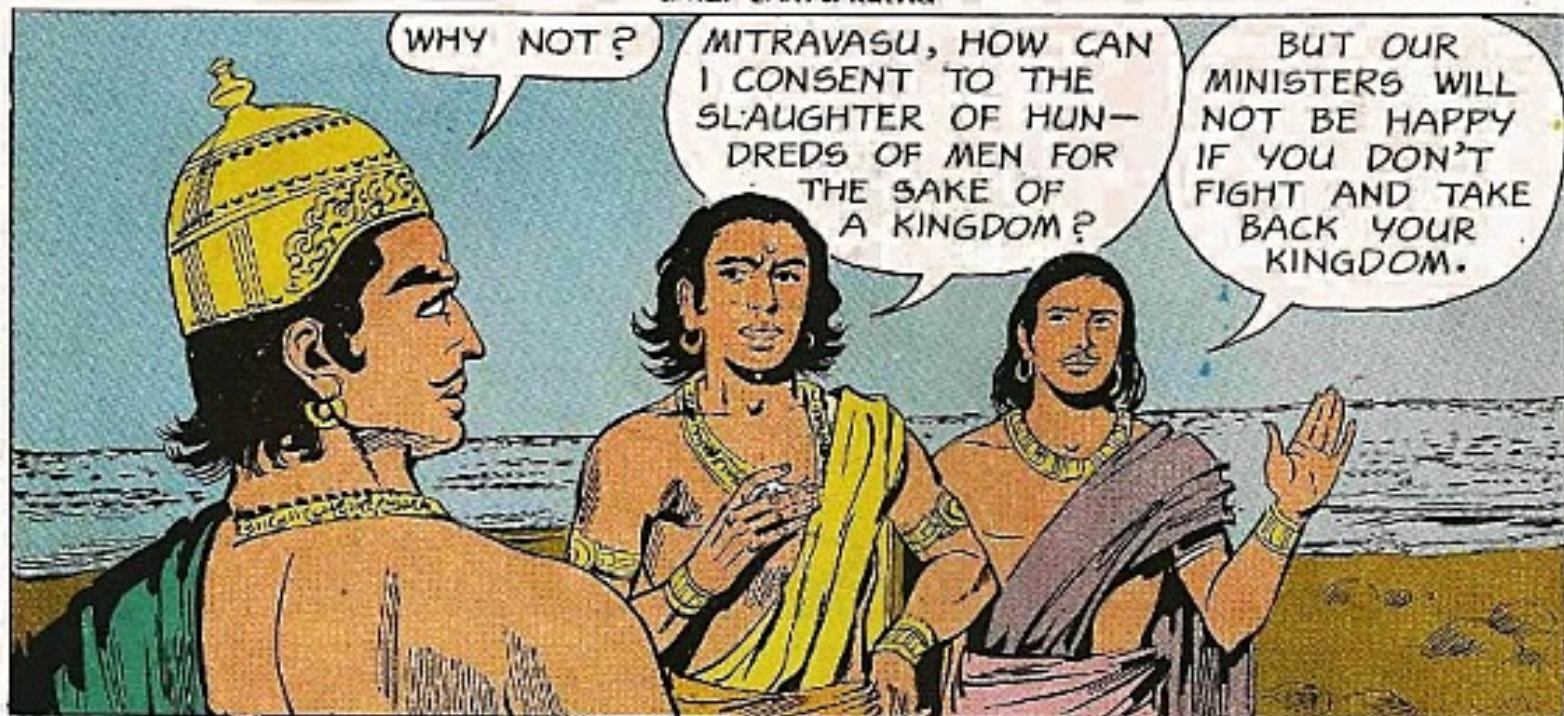
MEANWHILE JIMUTAVAHANA, MITRAVASU AND ATREYA HAD STROLLED TOWARDS THE SEASHORE.

JIMUTAVAHANA, THE WICKED MATANGA HAS OCCUPIED YOUR KINGDOM. WE SHALL DECLARE WAR ON HIM. WE ONLY AWAIT YOUR ORDERS.

I WILL NOT PERMIT YOU TO DECLARE WAR.



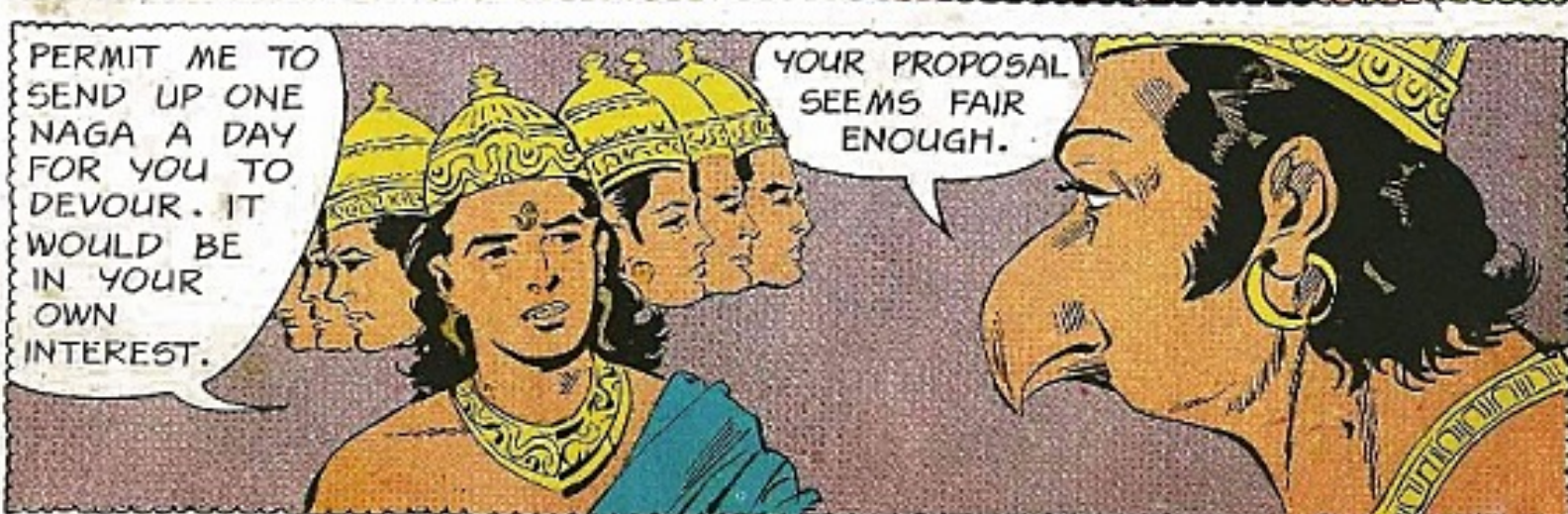
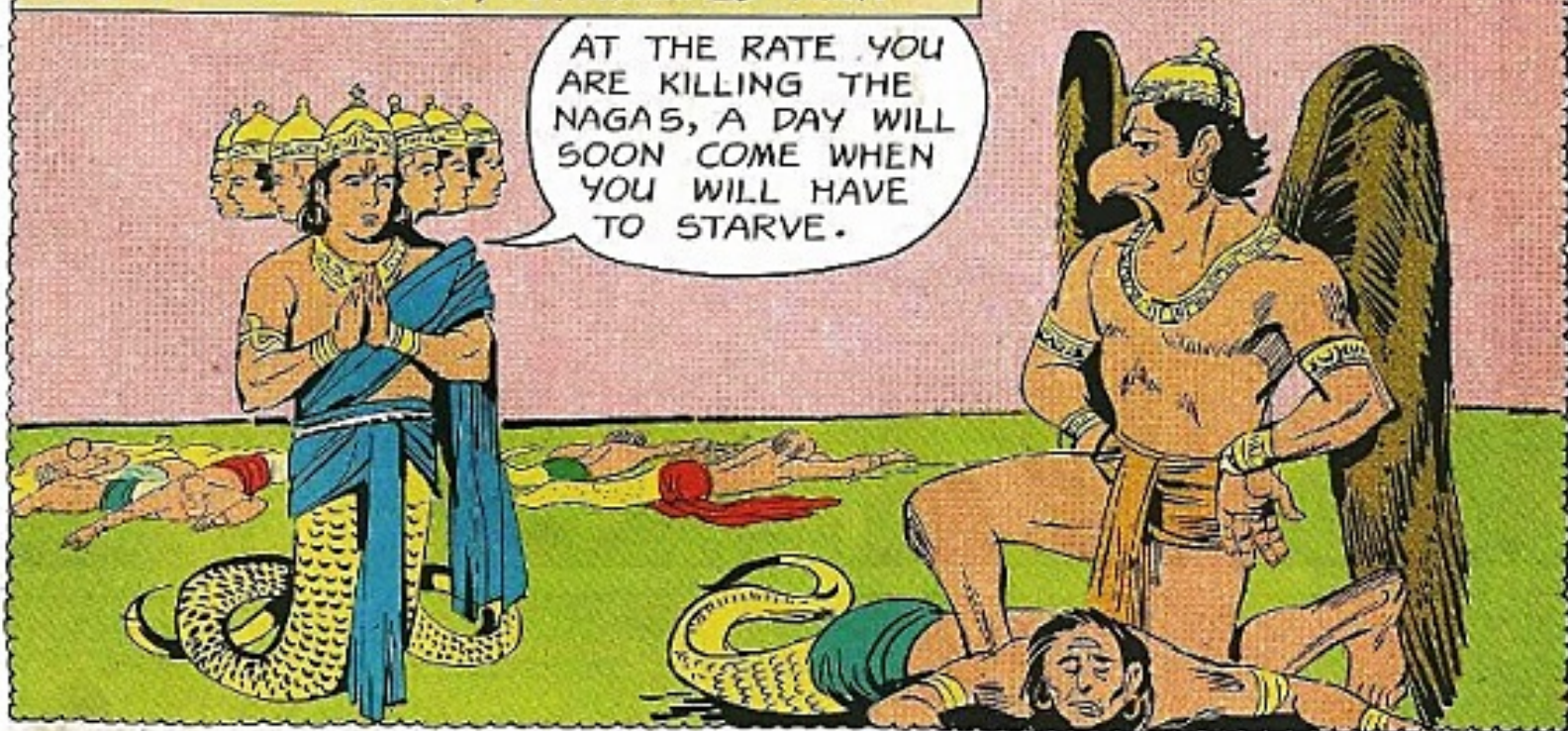








...AND MASSACRE AND DEVOUR COUNTLESS NAGAS. ONE DAY, VASUKI, KING OF THE NAGAS, APPROACHED HIM.



\* THE MYTHICAL WORLD BELOW THE EARTH, WHERE THE NAGAS LIVED.



WHAT YOU SEE  
THERE ARE THE  
GLEAMING BONES OF  
GARUDA'S ILL-FATED  
VICTIMS.

AH! IF I COULD  
PROTECT BUT ONE  
NAGA BY OFFERING  
MY OWN BODY!

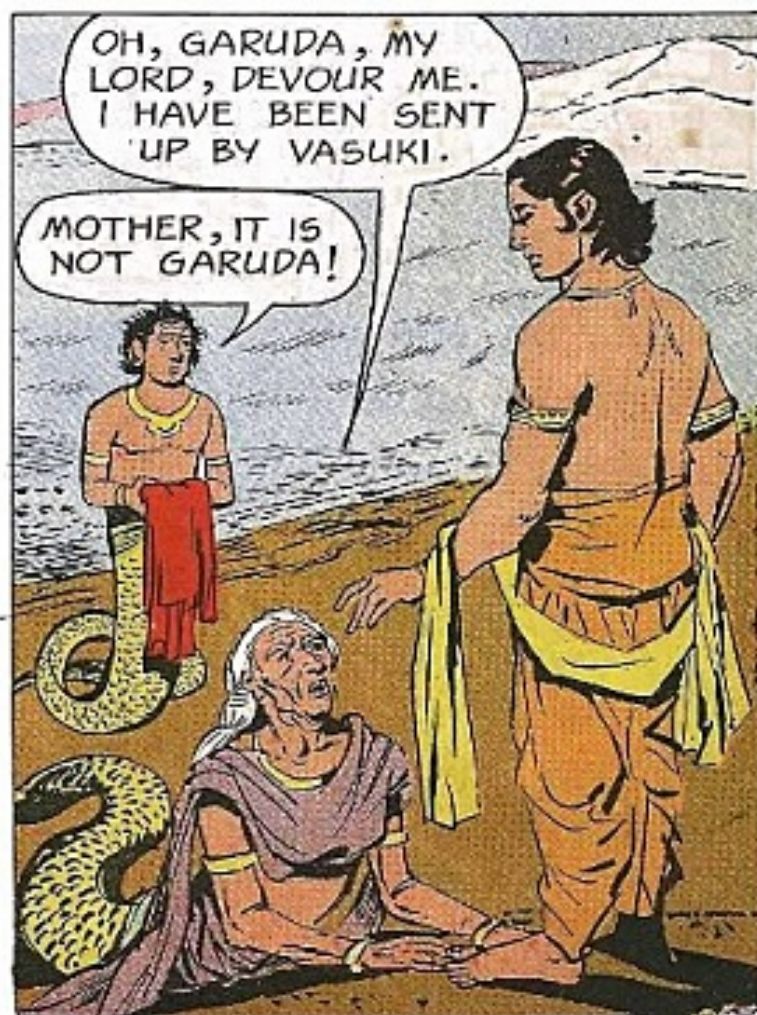
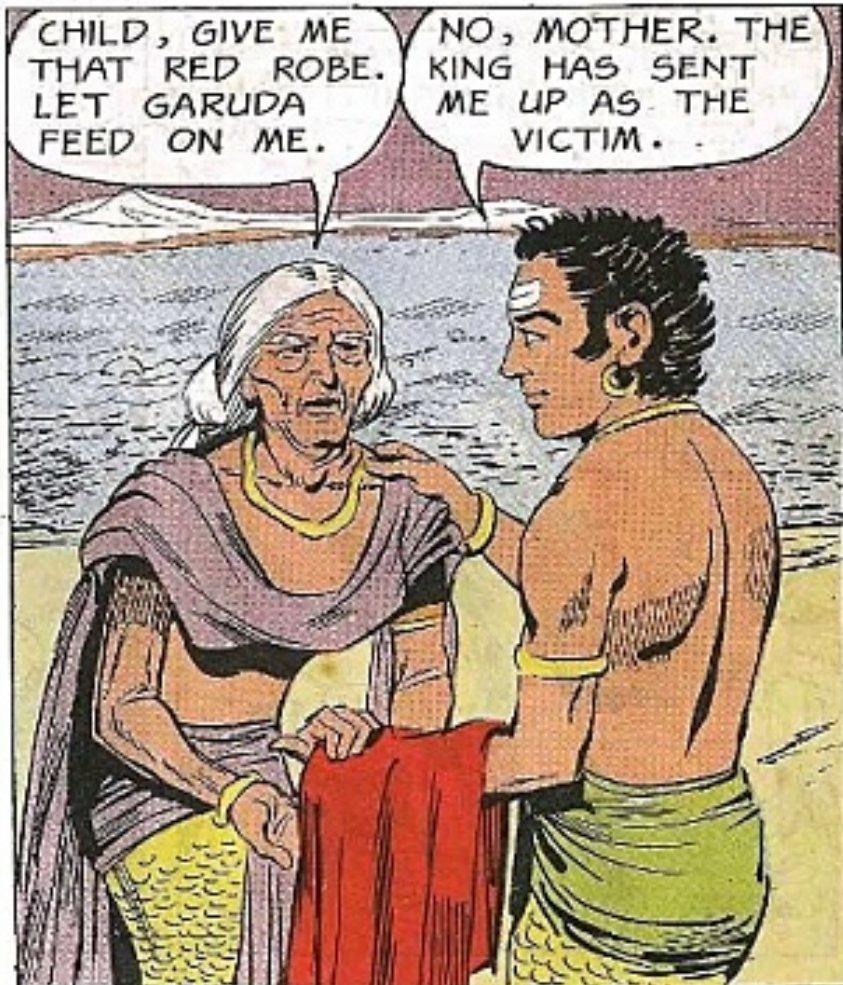
JIMUTA,  
IT'S GETTING  
LATE. LET  
US GO.

LET ME NOT  
DETAIN YOU.  
YOU MAY GO.  
I WILL JOIN YOU  
IN A WHILE.

MITRAVASU LEFT AND JIMUTAVAHANA WAS ALONE. SUDDENLY  
A PITEOUS CRY PIERCED THE SILENCE —

ALAS! MY BELOVED  
SON! HOW CAN  
I GIVE YOU UP?

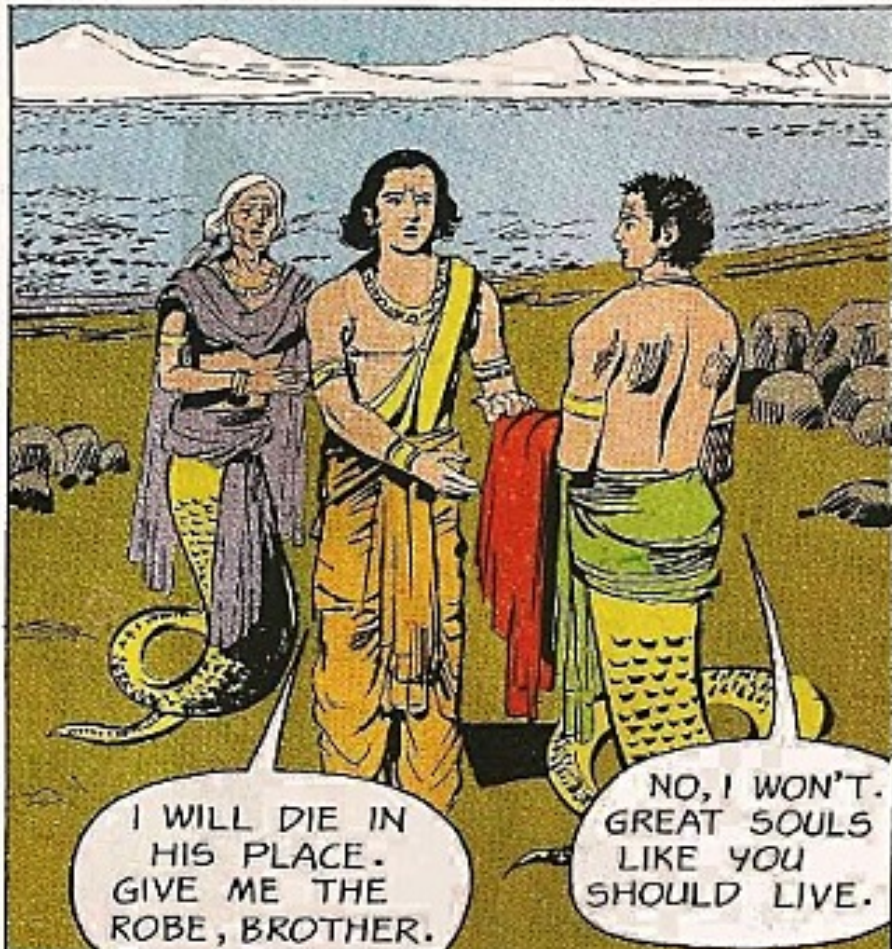






THE FEAR OF GARUDA MAKES ME SEE HIM EVERYWHERE.

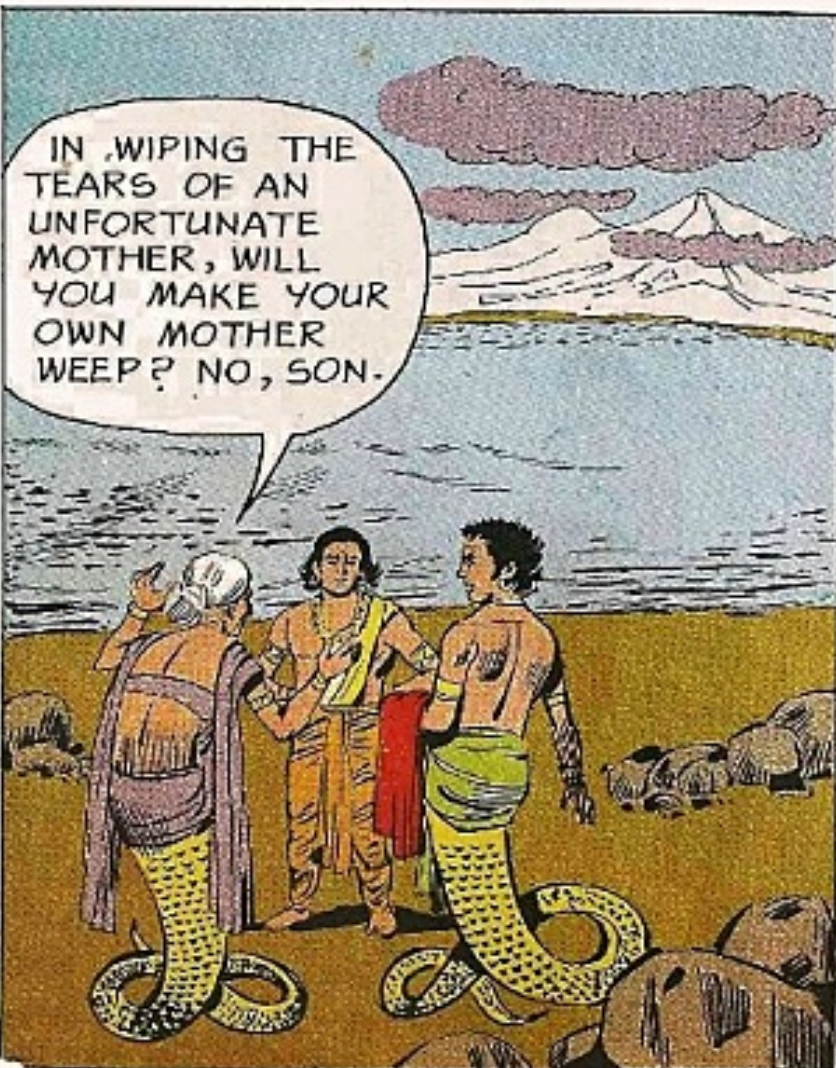
MOTHER, TAKE HEART. I HAVE COME TO SAVE YOUR SON.



I WILL DIE IN HIS PLACE. GIVE ME THE ROBE, BROTHER.

NO, I WON'T. GREAT SOULS LIKE YOU SHOULD LIVE.

IN WIPING THE TEARS OF AN UNFORTUNATE MOTHER, WILL YOU MAKE YOUR OWN MOTHER WEEP? NO, SON.



MOTHER, THERE IS STILL TIME FOR ME TO SALUTE LORD SHIVA FOR THE LAST TIME.



I'LL COME WITH YOU.



AS THE MOTHER AND SON GLIDED AWAY —

OF WHAT USE IS MY LIFE IF IT CAN'T SAVE ANOTHER. IF ONLY I HAD THE RED ROBE...



AT THAT MOMENT, THE SERVANT OF THE QUEEN OF THE SIDDHAS CAME THERE WITH THE RED ROBE.

HERE IS THE CUSTOMARY RED ROBE FOR THE NEWLY-WEDDED PRINCE. YOUR MOTHER-IN-LAW REQUESTS YOU TO WEAR IT FOR TEN DAYS.

IT HAS COME AT THE RIGHT TIME.

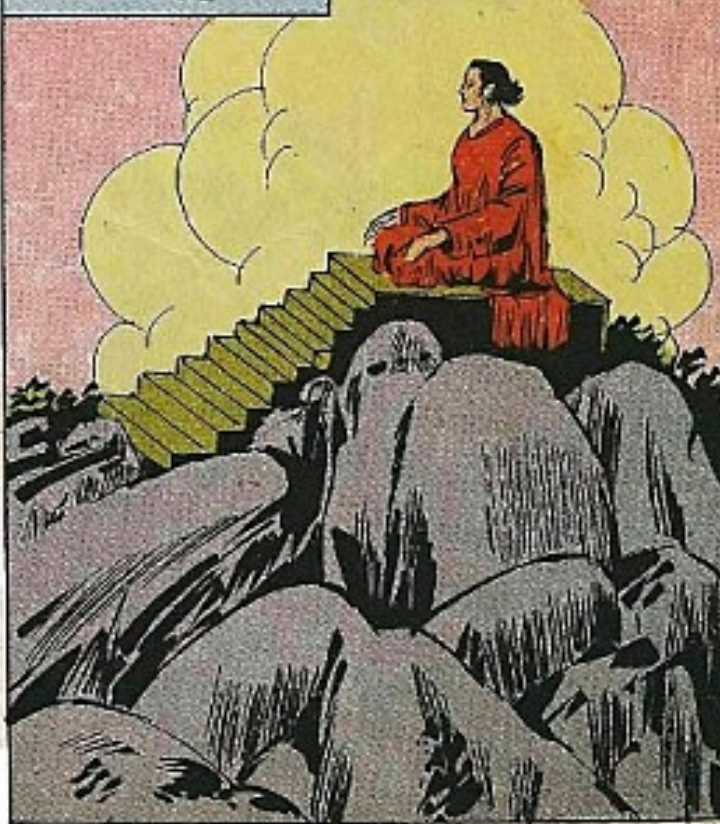
MY RESPECTS TO THE QUEEN.



MY MARRIAGE TO MALAYAVATI HAS BORNE FRUIT. IT IS GOING TO HELP ME SAVE A LIFE.



AS SOON AS JIMUTAVAHANA, CLAD IN THE RED ROBE, OCCUPIED THE SEAT OF SACRIFICE...





...GARUDA SWOOPED  
DOWN UPON HIS  
PREY AND GRIPPING  
HIM IN HIS CLAWS,  
FLEW WITH HIM...



...TO THE TOP OF THE MALAYA MOUNTAINS.





MEANWHILE, JIMUTA VAHANA'S PARENTS WERE ANXIOUS.

WHY HASN'T HE RETURNED YET?

WHERE COULD HE HAVE GONE?



DO YOU KNOW WHERE HE IS, CHILD?

A VAGUE DREAD FILLS MY HEART. SOMETHING TELLS ME THAT JIMUTA'S LIFE IS IN DANGER!



AT THAT MOMENT, GARUDA, CARRYING HIS PREY, FLEW OVER THEM.

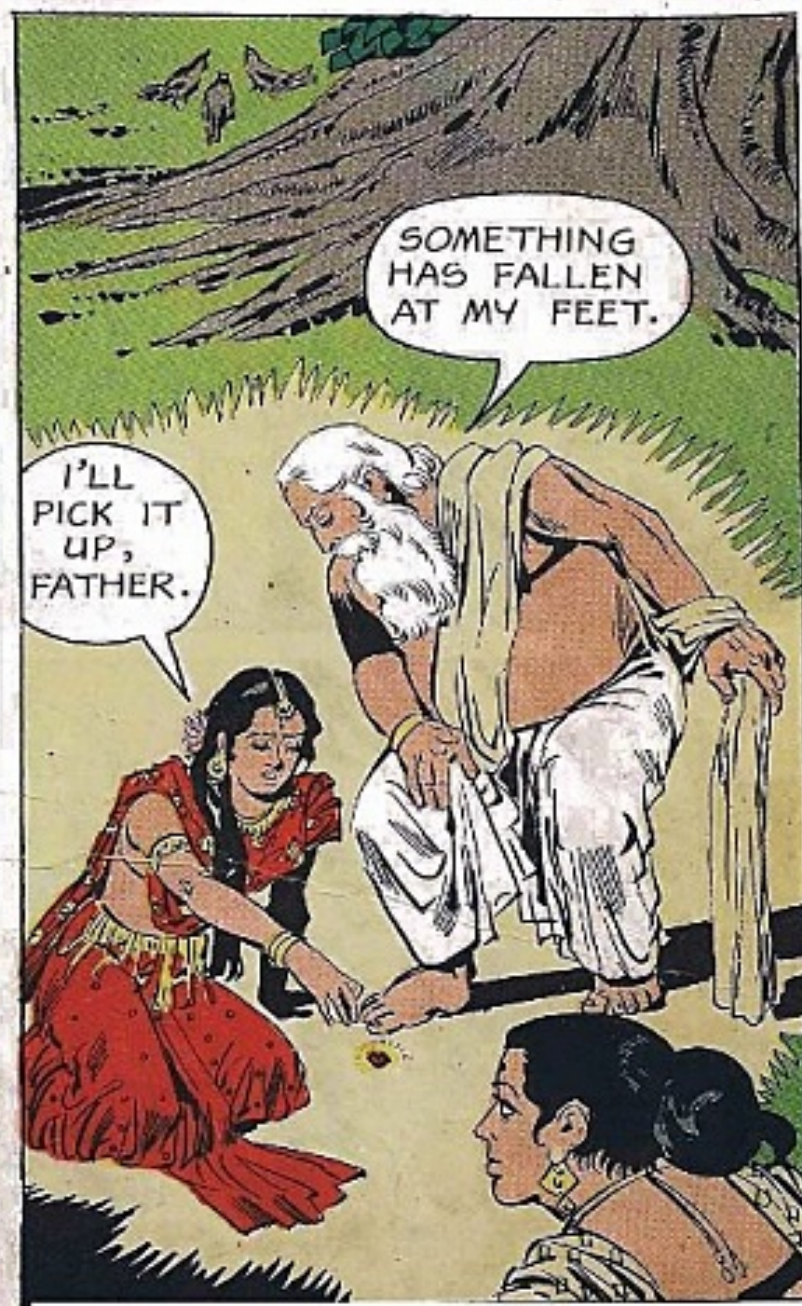
WHA—WHAT'S THAT?

IT'S A HUGE BIRD. ITS WINGS HAVE COVERED THE SUN.

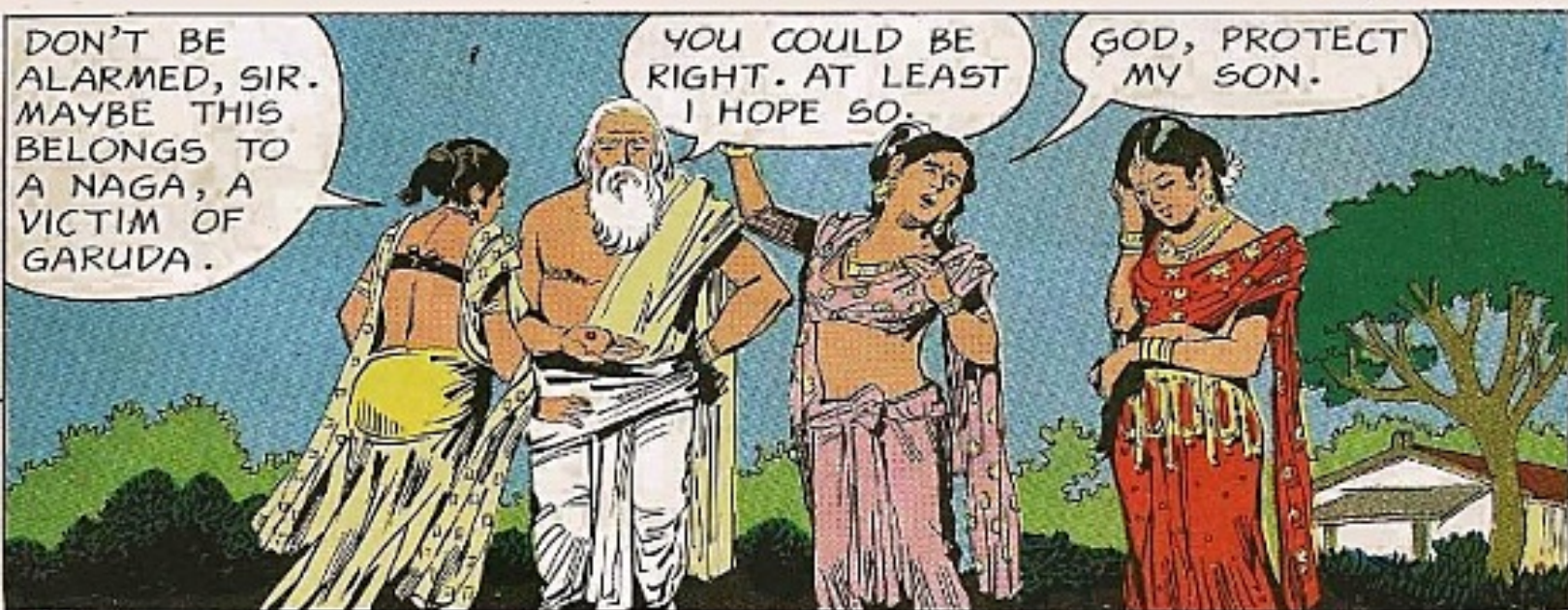


SOMETHING HAS FALLEN AT MY FEET.

I'LL PICK IT UP, FATHER.









MEANWHILE SHANKHACHOODA RETURNED FROM THE TEMPLE, AND MADE HIS WAY TO THE SEAT OF THE SACRIFICE.



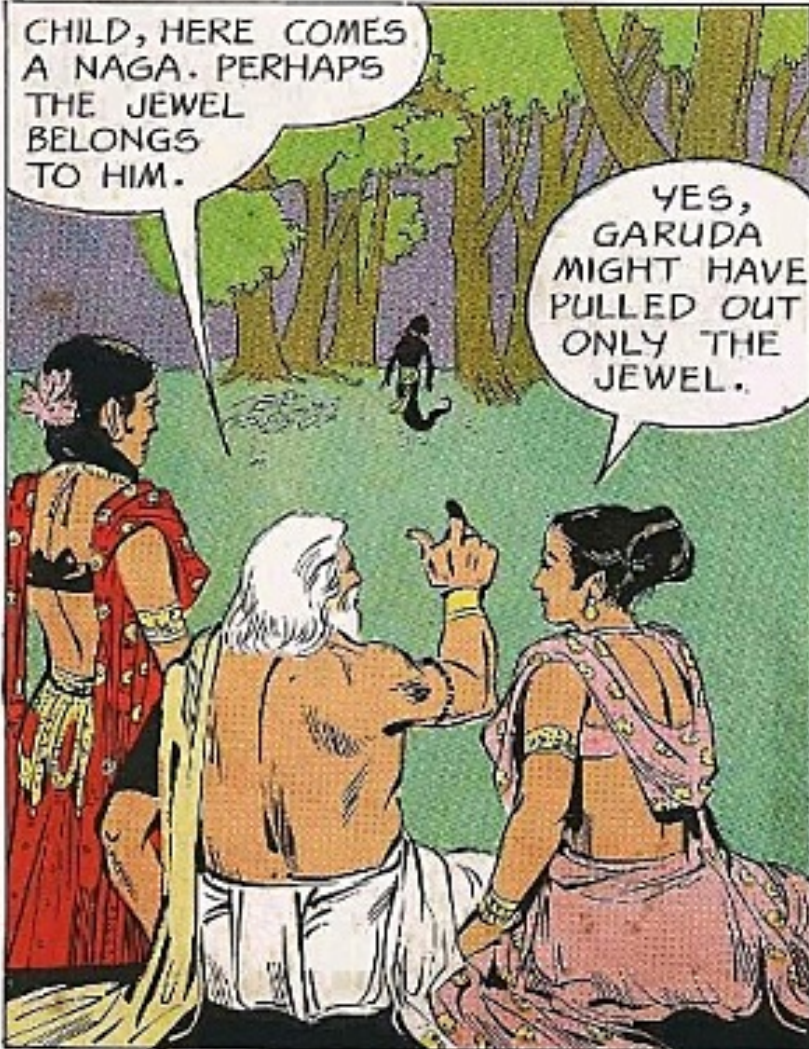
BLOOD! OH GOD! GARUDA MUST HAVE TAKEN AWAY THAT GOOD SOUL!

FULL OF GUILT, HE GLIDED ABOUT AIMLESSLY.



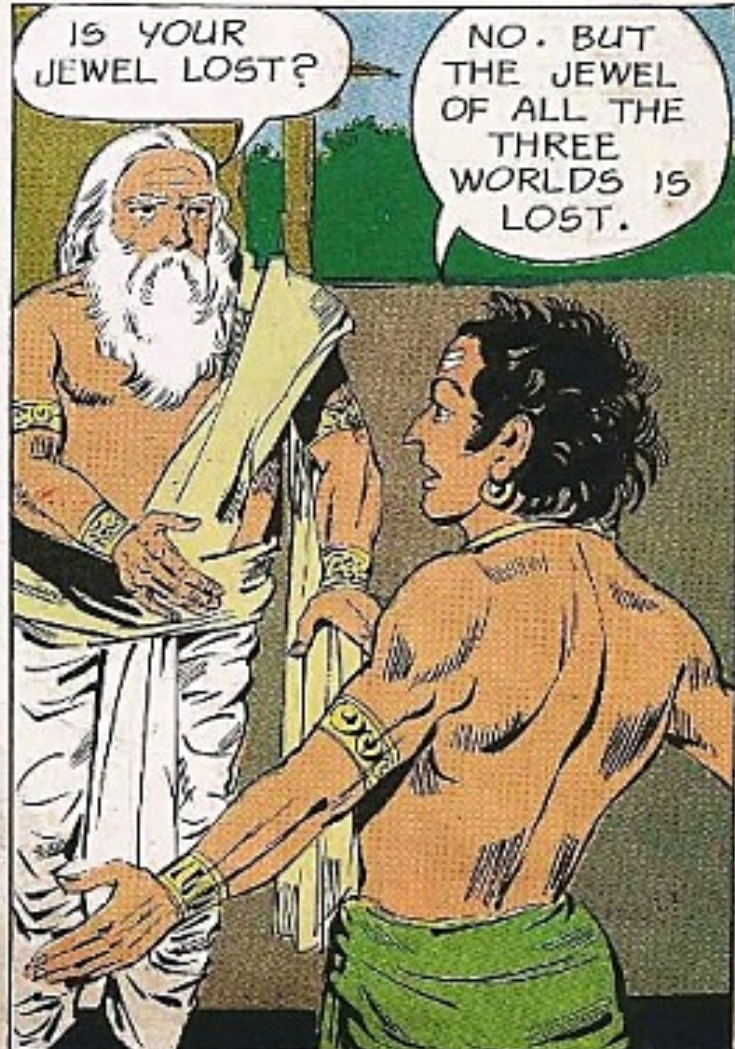
IT'S NOT GARUDA. IT IS I WHO KILLED THAT GREAT MAN.

CHILD, HERE COMES A NAGA. PERHAPS THE JEWEL BELONGS TO HIM.



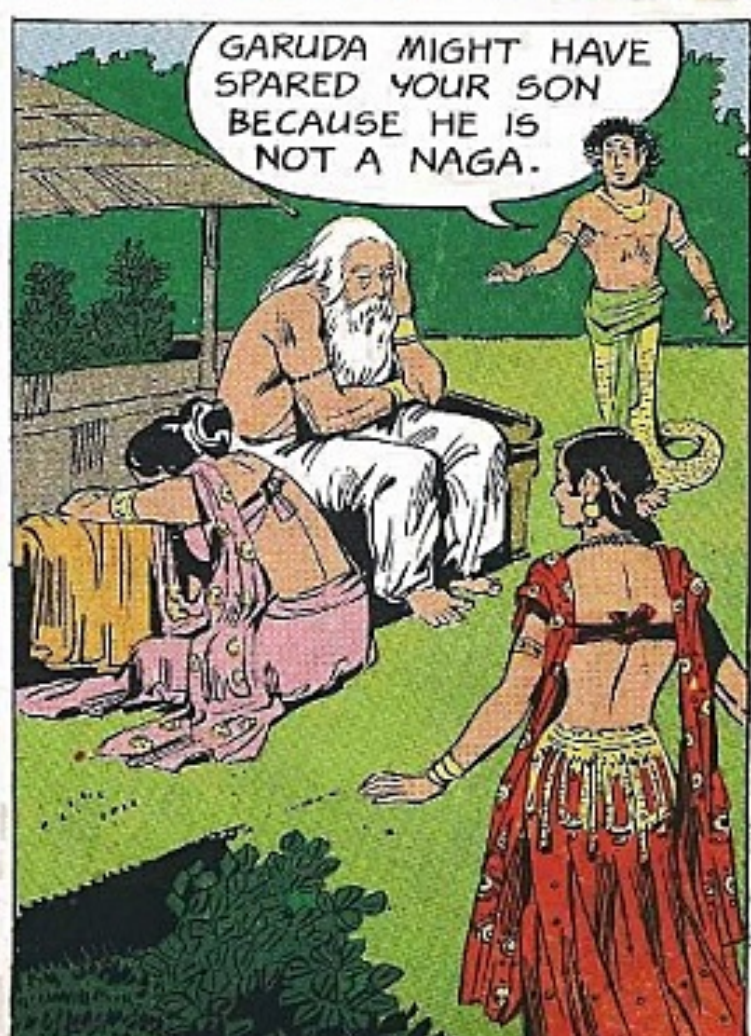
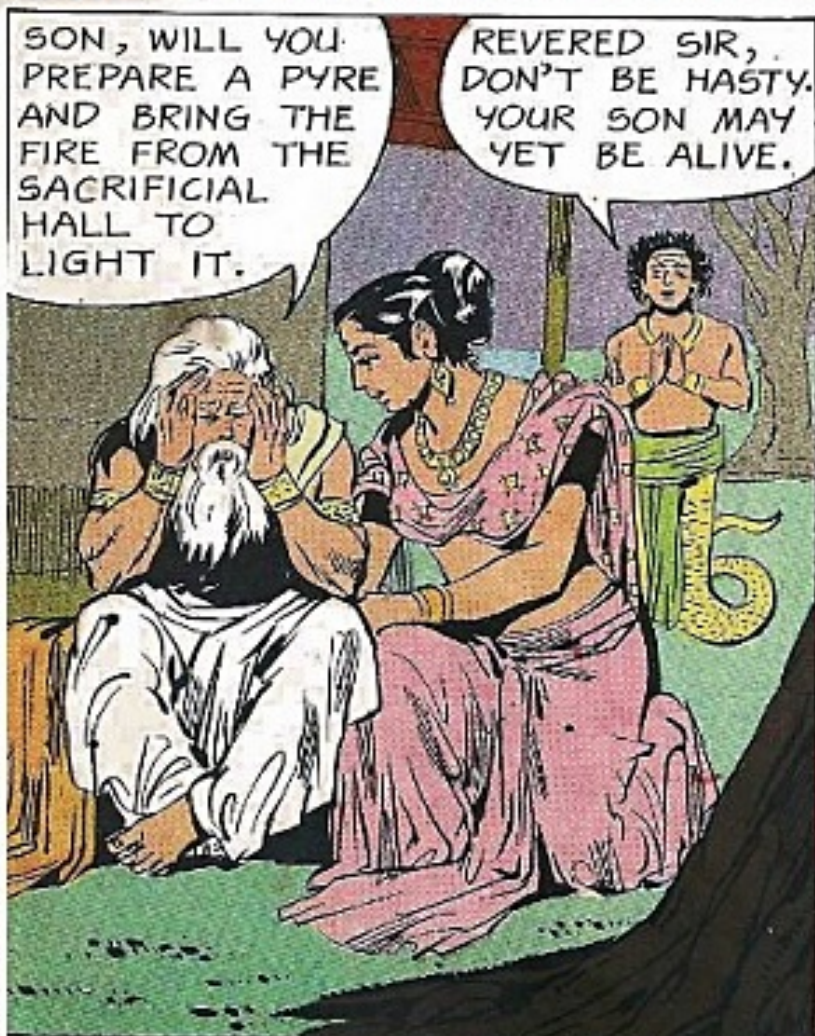
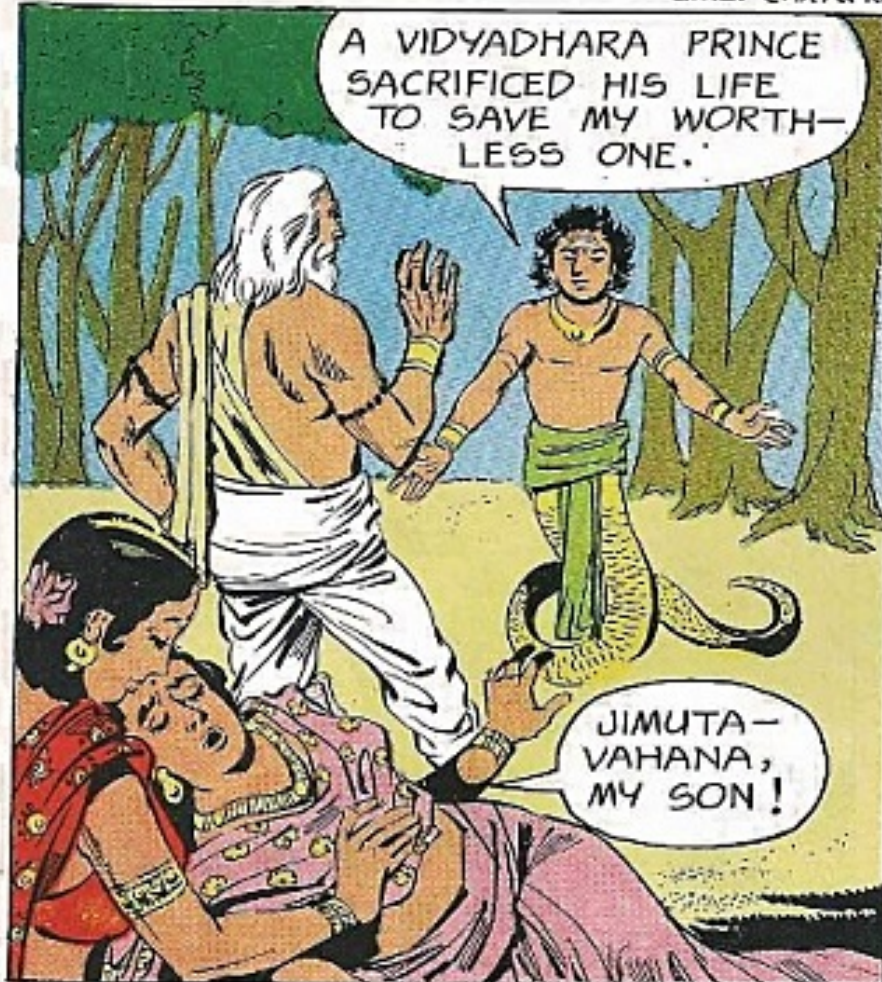
YES, GARUDA MIGHT HAVE PULLED OUT ONLY THE JEWEL.

IS YOUR JEWEL LOST?



NO. BUT THE JEWEL OF ALL THE THREE WORLDS IS LOST.







SUSTAINED BY THAT FAINT HOPE, THEY FOLLOWED THE TRAIL OF BLOOD.

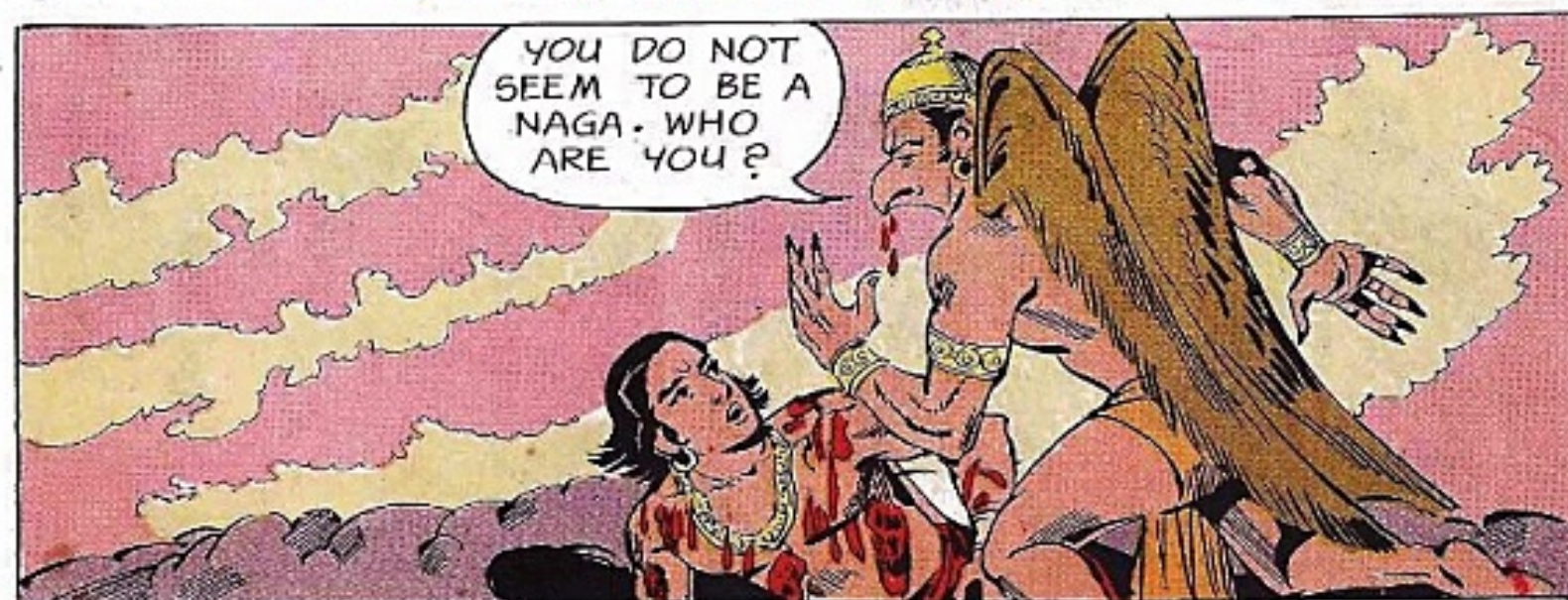


THERE, ON TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN, SAT GARUDA, PECKING AT JIMUTAVAHANA.

HITHERTO ALL MY VICTIMS WERE PANIC-STRICKEN. THIS ONE IS CALM AND PEACEFUL.



YOU DO NOT SEEM TO BE A NAGA. WHO ARE YOU?





AT THAT MOMENT, SHANKHACHOODA RUSHED FORWARD AND ANSWERED HIS QUESTION.

GARUDA, HE IS JIMUTA-  
VAHANA, A VIDYADHARA  
PRINCE. I AM THE NAGA  
SENT UP FROM PATALA!



WHAT! THE VIRTUOUS  
JIMUTAVAHANA! ALAS,  
WITH THIS ONE ACT  
I HAVE SUNK INTO  
A MIRE OF SIN.

O SHANKHACHOODA,  
DON'T FRUSTRATE  
MY ONE DESIRE.



THAT VERY MOMENT  
GARUDA UNDERWENT  
A GREAT TRANSFOR-  
MATION.

TO SAVE ONE LIFE HE  
HAS SACRIFICED HIS!  
AND WRETCH THAT I AM,  
I HAVE ALMOST DEVoured  
HIM.





JIMUTAVAHANA!

SHANKHACHOODA!  
QUICK! COVER MY  
BODY. THEY WILL  
NOT STAND THE  
SHOCK OF SEEING  
ME BATHED IN  
BLOOD.

LIE STILL,  
BROTHER. DO NOT  
EXHAUST WHAT LIFE  
IS LEFT IN YOU.

OUR BELOVED  
CHILD!

MY  
HUSBAND!

FATHER! MOTHER!  
I BOW TO YOU FOR  
THE LAST TIME.  
BLESS ME.

MOTHER GOWRI,  
HOW FALSE WERE  
YOUR WORDS!

NO! YOU  
CAN'T DIE! NOT  
WHEN I AM  
STILL ALIVE.



I AM A SINNER.  
I HAVE NO RIGHT  
TO LIVE. I SHALL  
ATONE FOR MY  
SINS BY KILLING  
MYSELF.

NO! DON'T. BY  
REPENTANCE ALONE  
CAN YOU ATONE  
FOR YOUR SINS.  
CEASE FOREVER  
FROM DESTROY-  
ING LIFE.

ADVISING GARUDA THUS, JIMUTAVAHANA  
BREATHED HIS LAST.

O DEVAS, WHY DO  
YOU NOT SHOWER  
AMRIT \* OVER MY  
SON AND REVIVE  
HIM ?

AMRIT! THE NECTAR OF  
IMMORTALITY! WHY DIDN'T  
I THINK OF IT! I WILL FLY  
TO INDRA AND  
ASK HIM FOR SOME.  
I SHALL REVIVE NOT  
ONLY JIMUTAVAHANA  
BUT ALL THE NAGAS  
I HAVE KILLED.

WHILE GARUDA WENT ON  
HIS MISSION —

FATHER! MOTHER!  
PERMIT ME TO  
ENTER THE FIRE  
WITH MY LORD.



GOWRI, BE  
MY WITNESS.  
HERE AND NOW  
I FOLLOW MY  
HUSBAND.



JUST THEN, GARUDA LET FALL A  
SHOWER OF AMRIT AND THE  
GODDESS MADE HER APPEARANCE.

WAIT, MY CHILD.  
HOW CAN MY  
WORDS PROVE  
FALSE? JIMUTA-  
VAHANA WILL  
LIVE.



JIMUTAVAHANA,  
RISE AND BECOME  
THE EMPEROR OF  
THE VIDYADHARAS.

I BOW  
TO YOU,  
MOTHER  
GOWRI.





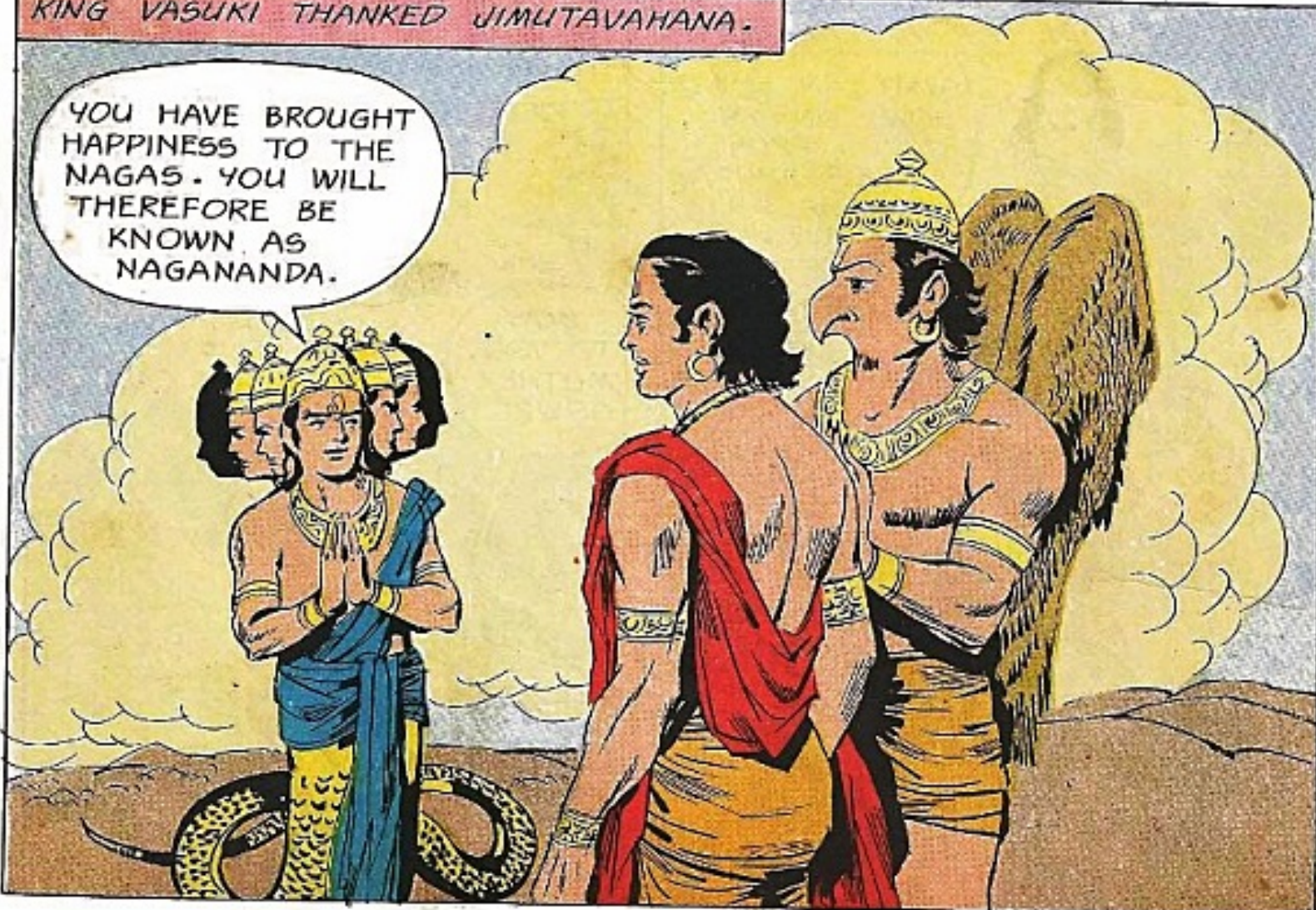
THEN GARUDA SHOWERED AMRIT OVER THE DEAD NAGAS...



...AND THEY TOO WERE REVIVED.

KING VASUKI THANKED JIMUTAVAHANA.

YOU HAVE BROUGHT  
HAPPINESS TO THE  
NAGAS. YOU WILL  
THEREFORE BE  
KNOWN AS  
NAGANANDA.





JIMUTAVAHANA  
AND THE OTHERS  
STARTED TO  
CLIMB DOWN.

WHO CAN THAT  
BE COMING THIS  
WAY IN A  
CHARIOT?

I THINK IT'S  
MATANGA.



JIMUTAVAHANA,  
PARDON ME  
AND COME  
BACK TO  
YOUR KING-  
DOM. THE  
PEOPLE  
WANT  
YOU.

I WOULD RATHER  
SERVE MY PARENTS  
THAN GO BACK  
TO RULE THE  
KINGDOM.



SON, THE WILL OF  
THE PEOPLE MUST  
NOT BE DISREGARDED.  
SERVE THEM. TAKE  
MALAYAVATI AND GO,  
WITH OUR BLESSINGS.




JIMUTAVAHANA, THE APOSTLE OF LOVE AND NONVIOLENCE WHO NEVER WENT AGAINST THE WISHES OF HIS FATHER, RETURNED TO HIS KINGDOM WITH MALAYAVATI AND BECAME THE EMPEROR OF THE VIDYADHARAS.



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